

## UNCLE SAM SCALING HIS COST OF LIVING

Cutting Down Cost of General  
Supplies Through Work of  
Department Experts.

SOME ARTICLES GOING UP

Difficulties in the Way of Let-  
ting Contracts Illustrated in  
Delay in Deciding on  
Typewriters.

(From The Tribune Bureau.)

Washington, Aug. 22.—Uncle Sam had had the high cost of living brought home to him in a very practical way—a way with which most housewives are familiar—and that is by going into the open market and buying groceries, household goods, fuel, ice and drygoods. It wasn't that the government was doing this as an experiment. Large amounts of these supplies are consumed by various departments each year, and the purpose of the government was to purchase them as cheaply as possible without allowing any inferiority of the goods.

As a result of the contracts which Uncle Sam has let out for supplying groceries and household supplies to the government for this fiscal year he will have to pay 17 per cent more for these articles than he paid last year. Fuel and ice have increased in cost 7 per cent, compared with last year, and drygoods 8 per cent in the last year.

In several other articles which the government will consume this year there has been a substantial reduction in price as compared with a year ago, principally forage, flour and feed, where the difference in cost as compared to last year is 2 per cent. The following table compares the prices which the government will pay for the fiscal year ending June 30 next with those paid last year.

	Increase, Decrease, Per Cent.
Stationery	5
Hardware, etc.	5
Drygoods	8
Fuel and chemicals	7
Laboratory apparatus	5
Electrical and engineering supplies	5
Lumber, etc.	10
Paints, oils, etc.	12
Furniture	5
Groceries and household supplies	17
Forage, flour and feed	2
Photographic supplies	20
Engraving and printing supplies	—
Fuel and ice	7
Incandescent gas lamp supplies	—

\*No change.

**On a Business Basis.**  
These figures are contained in a report made by Dr. O. H. Briggs, superintendent of supplies, and they focus attention on an arm of the government which, though little heard of, is engaged in the most important and interesting task of placing the purchase of all supplies used by the government on a business basis, so that while a considerable saving may be made as regards cost the quality of the supplies is not lessened. In fact, in most cases it is enhanced.

The General Supply Committee is the name of this branch of the government, and it had its inception during President Taft's administration, when Congress, following recommendations from the White House, passed an act on June 17, 1909, creating it. A representative from each of the ten executive departments make up this committee, and in the three years it has been in existence considerable saving has been made in the cost of supplies purchased.

The duties of this committee are to prepare and submit to the Secretary of the Treasury for his approval not later than February 1 of each year a schedule of specifications of supplies that in its judgment should be covered by general supply contracts. This schedule is to include all supplies of a kind that are used in common by two or more of the executive departments and government establishments in the city of Washington. In preparing the schedule the committee carefully considers the needs of the respective departments and establishments and make provision for such articles as are best suited to the requirements of the service, eliminating all unnecessary articles and all unnecessary grades and varieties of articles.

In addition, the General Supply Committee also has the following powers, which in effect make it the actual purchasing board of the government, for the Secretary of the Treasury rarely overrules any action taken by it:

It shall open and consider all proposals for furnishing supplies described in the annual schedules and recommend to the Secretary of the Treasury such action as in its judgment should be taken.

It shall aid the Secretary of the Treasury in securing the proper fulfillment of contracts and in making additions to the schedules.

The General Supply Committee is authorized to call upon experts in the government service for advice and assistance in the preparation of specifications and in passing upon proposals and samples submitted with proposals.

**Chaos in the Old Days.**

When the General Supply Committee began its work, three years ago, a condition of affairs was uncovered which would have shocked the ordinary business man. Each department purchased its own supplies, with the result that prices for the same articles varied considerably, even where the one contractor supplied two or more departments. There was no uniformity of prices, and it was found that a contractor would sell an article to a department for one price and to another department for a higher price. The varieties of supplies purchased were also surprising. In the case of ordinary lead pencils, for instance, 230 different kinds were used. As a result of the work of the committee this number has been cut down to eleven. Pens and envelopes also were purchased in numerous varieties and at all conceivable prices, but these, too, have been standardized.

Nothing shows better the magnitude of

CENTURY PLANT AT BOTANICAL GARDENS.



the work of the committee than the number of articles used commonly in the various departments as collated by its members. There are 13,000 different kinds of supplies in use by the government departments, and the supply committee is rapidly standardizing them, at a consequent saving to the government.

These various and sundry supplies have been segregated under eighteen separate heads, as follows:

Stationery, hardware, etc., drygoods, drugs and chemicals, laboratory apparatus, electrical and engineering supplies, lumber, etc.; paints, oils, etc.; furniture, groceries and household supplies, forage, flour and seed; photographic supplies, engraving and printing supplies, fuel and ice, incandescent electric lamps, incandescent gas lamp supplies, motor trucks, typewriters and computing machines.

**One Contract Held Up.**

Contracts for all of the articles embraced under these sub-heads have been let for the present fiscal year, with the exception of the last named, and the difficulties with respect to the letting of this contract illustrate some of the things that the committee encounters.

So far as the committee is concerned, it has made its recommendations to the Secretary of the Treasury, but the latter has not put his O. K. on their award, but will probably take some action next week. The typewriter contract has been on the desk of the Secretary of the Treasury for some time, with the result that his office has been a sort of mecca for the agents of the various makes. None of them has been able to see Mr. McAdoo, but they have made the life of Mr. Martin, his secretary, miserable by their importunities.

Some of them have suggested a nice little dinner with Mr. Martin to talk it over, while others have adopted more vigorous forms in which to present their side. Mr. Martin has succeeded, however, in getting them to reduce their arguments to writing, and they are now on the desk of the Secretary of the Treasury awaiting his scanning.

The ordinary observer does not understand the importance of an award of this kind, but its value for advertising purposes is unlimited. The government uses only 2 per cent of the type of machines, but it isn't the sale of the machines to the government that interests the typewriter agents, but the sales they expect to others that will follow its adoption by Uncle Sam. One typewriter concern offered to furnish typewriters free to the government for three months if its particular make were adopted.

**Seeking Higher Grades.**

The General Supply Committee tries as far as possible to avoid standardizing on any particular make. It has specifications prepared, and bidding is thrown open to the public. And the bids received on every article on which a contract is let are printed for public distribution. Sometimes the lowest bidder does not get the contract, because it is the consistent aim of the committee to negotiate for a better and more satisfactory grade of supplies for each year, in order to more nearly meet the needs and requirements of the service, in the belief that the purchase of an inferior quality of supplies, even at cheaper prices, is false economy.

Sometimes the committee has a little trouble with the head of a department, who believes that he ought to be allowed to spend his appropriation as he sees fit, but this does not occur very often, because the General Supply Committee is composed, as a rule, of the men in charge of the supplies of the various departments.

As a result of the work of the committee comparisons show that the general schedule for the fiscal year 1910, in competition with the various departmental schedules for 1909, showed a decreased

cost—that is, effected a saving for the government for the year—of \$18,000; that the general schedule for 1911 effected a saving over 1910 of \$4,472.83, and that the schedule for 1912 effected a still further saving of \$32,156.03 over 1911.

One of these days the government will establish a big warehouse for its supplies in Washington, if Dr. Briggs can carry out his plans, and a still greater saving in the cost of government supplies will result.

### CENTURY PLANT ATTRACTS

Many Persons Go to See Agave  
Sticta in Bloom.

The century plant, Agave Sticta, in bloom in the New York Botanical Gardens yesterday attracted many visitors from New York and other places. This rare plant was brought from Mexico. It has very narrow, light green leaves, which are pointed on the edges and grow about two feet from the ground. From the center arises a smooth stem or stalk twelve feet high. Along the top of this stem for about three feet is a cluster of small yellow flowers with funnel shaped corollas. It will remain in bloom probably two weeks longer.

This plant was given to the garden by Mrs. George Such in 1909. The Agave Sticta's natural home is in a desert, and it blooms only once, then slowly dies. It is the fifth century plant that has bloomed in the garden in ten years and can be found just outside Conservatory No. 1.

Another interesting flower blooming in the garden for the first time is the Holy Ghost orchid, or Peristena Elata. The leaves are about six inches wide, and from the center a stalk three feet high arises. The flowers are shaped like tulips and are white. In the center of each flower is the figure of a dove, with little pink dotted wings, white head and body and a yellow bill.

Many other plants are now in full bloom in the gardens. There are water lilies of many colors from tropical countries—pink Indian lotus, American lotus, Panama hat plant, giant Chinese bamboo, coccoloba plant and the largest rubber tree under cultivation, which stands forty-five feet high.

### WOMEN IN LABOR PARADE

Trade Union League to Participate—May Have Floats.

The Labor Day committee of the Women's Trade Union League, whose affiliated unions have for years made a good showing in the Labor Day parades of the Central Federated Union, announced yesterday that it will meet to-morrow to prepare for joining the Central Federated Union parade on Labor Day, Monday, September 1. It is expected that there will be, as in other years, a number of floats illustrating different branches of labor.

The general Labor Day committee of the Central Federated Union has sent invitations to all its affiliated unions asking them to join in the parade. Most of the organizations will have distinctive uniforms. The invitations sent out, however, say that ununiformed delegations will be welcome.

It was stated that badges and sashes and everything else displayed in line must be union made, and the horses on which the marshals ride must be union shod.

### MOTOR TRUCK KILLS CHILD.

Olga Maholkonith, who is only five years old, was knocked down and run over yesterday afternoon by a motor truck as she was crossing 63rd street to her home at No. 419. She died at the Reception Hospital before she could be operated upon.

## B. Altman & Co.

SPECIAL OFFERINGS, FOR TO-MORROW (MONDAY), WILL  
CONSIST OF

### An Important Sale of SELECTED ORIENTAL RUGS

in the newly enlarged Rug Department (located on the Fifth Floor), consisting of an extraordinary assortment of choice pieces at the following very special prices:

#### ORIENTAL RUGS

usually \$22.50 to 47.50 at \$14.00 to 24.00

#### ORIENTAL HALL RUNNERS

usually \$65.00 to 90.00 at \$30.00 & 42.00

#### ORIENTAL RUGS in Room Sizes

usually \$125.00 to 1,250.00 at \$68.00 to 675.00

These Rugs, the wearing qualities of which are guaranteed, were purchased in the Orient by B. Altman & Co.'s New York buyers.

### A Sale of Women's Silk Gloves

2-clasp, in all-black, all-white, and white with black embroidery, at the special price of . . . 65c. per pair.

### Misses' Washable Dresses

suitable for street and indoor wear, will be on special sale, to close out at the exceptionally low prices of . . . \$2.25 & 3.90  
Original prices \$7.50 to 18.00

## B. Altman & Co.

are showing in the departments for Apparel applicable to the School and College Girl, the new Autumn styles in

PRACTICAL DRESSES of challis, serges, diagonals, wool crepes and clan plaids.

SERVICE COATS of bouclés, cut chinchillas, wool velours and imported Scotch mixtures.

TAILOR-MADE SUITS of plain and two-toned chamois cords, diagonals and shark skin chevrons.

BOYS' SCHOOL SUITS, HATS AND CAPS AT MODERATE PRICES.

### The Fur Department (Third Floor)

has now in readiness a choice selection of Furs indicative of the Winter fashions, including Fur Garments of superior quality, moderately priced, in staple and serviceable models, plain or in effective combinations.

Women's Fur Motor Coats and loose-fitting fur-lined Cloth Coats designed for field sports, travel and steamer wear.

FUR TRIMMINGS in the various fashionable widths and colorings.

### Women's Blouses

The new Blouses of chiffon, crepe de chine and various laces, of both foreign and domestic make, show the most attractive styles at moderate prices, including the drop shoulder effects.

### Mourning Dresses and Suits Ready-to-Wear or Made-to-Order

of the most desirable materials and in the approved modes for Mourning; Also Mourning Coats, Blouses, House Gowns, Hats, Veils, Gloves, Hosiery, etc.

If desired, a representative will call to submit goods for selection.

The Services of the Mail Order Department are at the disposal of Out-of-town patrons.  
Telephone, 7000 Murray Hill.

### An Exceptional Sale of Imported Lace Curtains and Panels

comprising 1,000 pairs of Imported Lace Curtains and 1,000 Imported Lace Panels, all in new, exclusive designs, made up especially for B. Altman & Co., and now offered at the following remarkably low prices:

CURTAINS of Marie Antoinette Lace, regular prices \$7.00, \$10.00 to \$14.00,

at . . . \$4.25, 5.85 & 7.50

CURTAINS of Lacet Arabe and Marie Antoinette combination, regular prices \$14.00, 17.00 to 24.00 . . . at \$7.50, 10.50 & 13.75

500 PANELS of Lacet Arabe and Marie Antoinette combination, regular prices \$9.00 to 14.00 each . . . at \$6.50, 8.00 & 9.50

500 FILET LACE PANELS, regular prices \$22.00 to \$40.00 each,

at . . . \$15.00, 17.50, 22.00 & 27.50

### A Sale of Stationery

consisting of boxes containing 50 sheets of letter size paper and 50 sheets of note paper, in blue, white or grey, with envelopes to match, offering special value at . . . 60c

## B. Altman & Co.

have prepared for the coming season, at moderate prices, a comprehensive assortment of Women's and Children's Swiss Ribbed Underwear, Women's Italian Silk Vests, Combination Suits and Bloomers, as well as "Betalph" Underwear, an exclusive make, in sizes for women, misses and children.

New importations of Sweaters have just been received, showing Sweaters of silk in novel colorings, and of wool in the new contrasting color effects.

### New Autumn Fashions in Tailor-made Suits are being displayed.

The fabrics, colors and styles are according to the latest Paris modes.

### Women's Autumn Coats & Wraps

for motor, street and evening wear are shown in a large and varied assortment of the newest models, made up in the latest materials, such as duvetyn, Bolivia cloth, wool plush and pile fabrics. (Third Floor)

### Autumn Importations of Dress Velvets and Plushes, English Velveteens and Corduroys

have just been received, and are being shown at very reasonable prices.

Special salespeople will, if desired, be detailed to accompany patrons to the store's various departments.

**EADE'S  
FOOT PILLS**  
The Old and  
Popular Remedy  
for Gout, Rheumatism,  
Sciatica, Lumbago, pains in  
the head, face and limbs. All  
Druggists and  
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Agents for U.S.A. 90 Beekman St. N.Y.

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It is the best coffee in this city. Try it.  
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Fall  
Opening  
of  
Furniture

If you are moving shortly our showrooms will contain many attractive suggestions for furnishing and decoration.  
Whether you are furnishing throughout or if in need of a few additional pieces, exactly what you wish is to be found here.  
Our new fall stock is complete with dainty White Enamel Furniture for the Bed Room, Stately Period Furniture for Dining Rooms with Wainscoting and Beamed Ceilings, and beautiful Sheraton, Chippendale, Adam and Heppelwhite styles, the light, graceful lines of which make them especially adapted to apartments.  
You will also be delighted at the gorgeous display of Oriental Rugs, exquisite in weave and coloring.

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